Tranquilizing Drugs Speed Mental Cures

Discharge Rate in B.C. Doubled, Says Black

By ALEC MERRIMAN

Use of tranquilizer drugs in mental hospitals in British Columbia has doubled the discharge rate of patients, Provincial Secretary Wesley Black, under whose department comes mental health, told the legislature yesterday.

He said in the past year some 3,500 B.C. patients had received tranquilizer drugs prescribed by a competent physician according to individual need.

Mr. Black described the drugs as "one of the most important steps in modern-day methods of treatment of mental health illness."

Since the legislature session opened Jan. 22 Mr. Black has come under almost constant criticism from the opposition for his handling of the mental health question, but he had little heckling as he spoke in the Throne Speech debate yesterday.

Maybe the opposition is saving it up for the time Mr. Black presents the mental health department annual report, which last year was filed on the last day of the sitting . . . and this is one of the complaints of the opposition members.

Mr. Black quoted from the 1957 mental health report and said that "of 1,465 patients who were admitted to our Crease Clinic, 96 per cent were returned to the community after an average hospitalization of two months."

He added that "not one of those 96 per cent came home afflicted with drug addiction."

Mr. Black said the government realizes the need for beds for mentally retarded persons and announced that Tranquille Hospital, formerly used for tuberculosis patients, will be used for 140 mentally retarded patients in the 20 to 40 age group.

He said the government had built a first-rate auditorium, gymnasium and swimming pool at Woodlands School at a cost of $450,000 and a 300-bed admission and infirmary care home for the aged at Port Coquitlam at a cost of more than $2,000,000, which will be opened in April.

Honest Effort Being Made

Since 1952 the Social Credit government has spent some $12,000,000 on mental health buildings, he said.

He said the government has "a problem in mental health and the solution is not easy to find, but we are making an honest effort."

For the second year there has been a trend to a reduction in patient population in the mental institutions at Wilkinson Road in Colquitz and Essondale, he said. In the nine-month period ending Dec. 31 there has been a reduction of 137 patients in residence in these institutions.

Fifty per cent of the patients at Essondale are in open wards with full freedom and privileges of the grounds, he said.

Mental health hospitals in B.C. are among the best in North America, he said, and pointed out that in 1957 in the United States mental hospital population had been reduced by 1.3 per cent, but in British Columbia it had been reduced by two per cent.

At Crease Clinic, he said, a new drug is being studied which promises to be extremely valuable in the treatment of severe depression and will replace electric shock treatment for some patients.

He said the government plans to provide additional money for the extension of evening care and therapy for patients who can remain in their homes and on their jobs while under treatment.

Mr. Black said the American Psychiatric Association will start a survey of B.C. mental health services this summer and Dr. Matthew Ross will be in charge of the research team.

Scope of the study will be:

1. To uncover the full range of needs for various types of psychiatric and allied services.
2. To identify all possible sources of such services.
3. To determine how existing and potential services could best be organized to meet the needs.
4. To recommend a variety of new services to supplement those in areas now inadequately covered.
5. To recommend means by which the services could be adequately staffed over a period of years.
6. To develop a sound basis for long-range planning.

* * *

WESLEY BLACK

Unhealthy Corner For MLA

Tony Gargrave (CCF—Mackenzie) got himself in a corner in the legislature yesterday when he was talking about mental health.

"I feel I should spend more time at Essondale that I do," he said.

"As a visitor, you understand," he added after the laughter died down.

Trouble Shooter

Off to a pair of potential trouble spots is British Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd. He left London yesterday for British Somaliland, where Egyptian propaganda is backing a new drive for independence, and then Aden, where six small states have banded together to fight neighboring Yemen's territorial claims.

Protestant Churches Plan

Hospital Sunday To Help Fund

Some local Protestant churches will revive Hospital Sunday on Feb. 15—100 years after the first observance of the day on this continent, Feb. 13, 1859, in Victoria's Christ Church.

All contributions will go into the building fund for a new $2,500,000 wing for Royal Jubilee Hospital.

Fund spokesman William Guild said: "As we know it today, the idea of Hospital Sunday was sponsored by the American College of Surgeons, soon after the founding of that body in 1913. But it is generally based on a Hospital Sunday started by St. Luke's Hospital in New York in 1874."

Local records show, however, that on Feb. 13, 1859, collections for "Hospital Sunday" taken up at morning and afternoon services in Christ Church raised the amount of $149 for the Royal Hospital.

"It was only observed sporadically here during the years that followed," said Mr. Guild, "but it is still a matter of historical significance."

Anglican churches and several United churches have agreed to revival of the observance.

A public campaign to raise $500,000 for construction of the new wing opens March 16. If it is successful, $2,000,000 more will come from federal, provincial and municipal governments for the building.

CHILD SKIERS

Six-week courses for youngsters are conducted at 17 elementary schools in Oslo, Norway.

Enemy of Corruption

Unionist Silenced

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A delegate to the Carpenters Union convention testified yesterday that he was cursed, threatened and told he would be sent home in a "wooden overcoat" when he tried to complain about union corruption.

Lionel Rowley, a business agent of Local 106 at Des Moines, Iowa, told the Senate Rackets Committee he received the rough treatment from agents of union president Maurice A. Hutcheson of Indianapolis.

When he presented his credentials at the union's convention at St. Louis last November, Rowley said, Hutcheson refused to seat him and union vice-president John R. Stevenson called him names.

Then he said he was threatened by one man with a gun and two others with blackjacks, and warned he would "go back to Des Moines in a wooden overcoat."

Rowley said his troubles began when he was elected a convention delegate on an anti-corruption platform.

Management's Man Blames Management

A management's man put the blame on management last night for allowing wages to rise.

W. C. R. Jones, Powell River Co. vice-president, said at a Victoria Junior Chamber of Commerce meeting where he was guest speaker:

"I don't blame the unions one bit for asking for more.

"I think management has defaulted all down the line—they must say 'no' and mean it."

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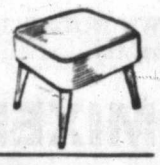

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